

# Task Forces In Action

NZ-TF1 (Palmerston North) and NZ-TF2 (Christchurch) now both have their own response vehicle (truck) and continue developing their cache and capability.

NZ-TF1 recently undertook a general rescue re-fresher course, this enabled TF-1 Technicians to qualify for their Orange Card which had not been previously available.



Task Force members also now have a secure section on the USAR website for their training and operational manuals.

## Response Teams

In March 2003, the National Steering Committee approved the best practice guideline for registering response teams.

This sets a new standard for teams wishing to seek recognition of their operating and training systems and in doing so become nationally registered to provide initial response to, and support at major structural collapse incidents.

Currently at least over five CDEM Groups have plans to develop such a capacity. Environment Canterbury's Rescue and Technical Support (RATS) Team became the first nationally registered team and was designated NZ-RT1 on May 26.

Nelson-Tasman's Emergency Response Team became the second team to become registered and was designated NZ-RT2 on the June 27, 2003. Who will be NZ-RT3?



**Above:** Environment Canterbury RATS (NZ-RT1) on exercise.

## Search Dogs

the end of the year. Operational handlers will then be able to undertake a tertiary education programme covering aspects of veterinary first aid, dog care, legislation, ethics, and transportation to prepare them for their advanced evaluation.

A new Fact Sheet (#8) about the Canine Search Specialist was launched on the website also, this fact sheet gives information on the training requirements and a new email for search dog queries [searchdogs@usar.govt.nz](mailto:searchdogs@usar.govt.nz) has been established.

A National USAR Search Dog Association is under formation to coordinate disaster dog training in New Zealand. Further developments will be posted to the USAR website (search dogs) and stakeholder email list.

## Introduction

The USAR budget has been successful in securing additional funding in the recently announced Government Budget for the forthcoming financial year.

The funding will enable the establishment of Task Force 3 in Auckland, in addition to supporting other activities.

The following provides a quick overview of current USAR activities.

### Training

The Training & Standards Working Group continues to progress the National Certificate in USAR, along with many other projects. Additionally USAR is now represented on the Fire & Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation.

A new guideline for providers of the national training programme is being developed. National training events including Basic Instructional Technique courses, General Rescue Trainer Assessments, USAR Awareness Trainer Courses are now on the website training schedule.

A guideline for *Trainer Certification* that also includes re-certification criteria is now available on the website.

An exemplar video is being developed to assist those intending to undergo the General Rescue Trainer Assessment – this video should be available from the NZ Police Library (CDEM Collection) by August 2003.



**Above:** Many of North Shore Initial Response Unit members have been qualified as General Rescue Trainers as part of the National USAR Training Programme.

### Website

The website continues to be a critical part of informing our stakeholders. All approved Best Practice Guidelines and Fact Sheets are available for down load.

A new USAR Directory has been added to list registered response teams, canine search specialists and other teams involved in USAR (un-registered).

Stakeholder updates are also emailed out regularly, to receive these updates simply send an email to [join@usar.govt.nz](mailto:join@usar.govt.nz).

**Below:** Palmerston North City Council's Rescue Emergency Support Team have been busy this year completing USAR, Rope and Swiftwater Responder programmes.



### Regional Activity

**Wellington** ran an excellent USAR exercise involving local teams and the two Task Forces over Queens Birthday weekend.

Several **Nelson-Tasman** responders will shortly complete a workplace assessor course.

**Taupo** are working hard towards their Orange Cards, with a CAT1A course planned for August.

Two **Auckland** teams continue progress against the LGITO Certificate in Emergency Welfare and Rescue.



**Left:** Brenda Woolly and Milo with NZ-TF2 Leader Artie Lind at the National USAR Dog Evaluation.